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AUTHOR Mullen, Carol A.

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ABSTRACT

The moral framework of a carousel is used to advance possible connections between the institutional and regulatory life within prisons and teacher education programs. The moral paradigm case narrated is based on the researcher's field experience in a prison as a researcher-teacher. Connections are drawn to restrictions within a correctional writing program and the qualitative protocols of research. The framework of a carousel promotes an expressive, less bounded way of studying prescriptive and liberatory practices. The carousel image underscores the institutional cycles of circularity, predictability, and continuity. Inmates, understood broadly, are viewed as prisoners of this pattern. The carousel also refers to the romance side of rehabilitation and re-education, and to institutional cover stories that can be disrupted in an effort to reform. The carousel framework is developed using multiple writing efforts that contradict traditional notions of education and rehabilitation. Through border crossing into correctional facilities or prison education, moral development in one's own field can be examined with respect to educational inquiry and its correctional elements; conversely, incarceration itself can produce liberatory elements that have educational meaning. It is argued that examining the cultures of teacher education and correctional facilities can lead to further insights into educators conceptions. (Contains 51 references.) (JLS)

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Running Head: MORAL FRAMEWORK

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Carousel: A Moral Framework for Inquiring into the Culture of Prisons and Academe

Carol A. Mullen

Florida State University

Institutional Affiliation:

Carol A. Mullen
Research Associate
Learning Systems Institute
205 Dodd Hall
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4041

Correspondence to:

669 Litchfield Ct.
Tallahassee, FL 32312-1826

E-mail address: mullenc@cet.fsu.edu
Residence telephone number: (904) 553-9366
Office telephone messages: (904) 644-1618

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Author Biography

Carol A. Mullen is a research associate at Florida State University in Tallahassee. She is also currently an artistic program coordinator and creative writing instructor at Jefferson Correctional Institution for female offenders. In her teaching and research she explores cultural self-identity issues using cross-cultural and multicultural methods of inquiry. Her forthcoming book, with others, is *Breaking the Circle of One: Redefining Mentorship in the Lives and Writings of Educators* (Peter Lang Publishing, Counterpoints Series).

Carol received her doctorate in curriculum studies and teacher development at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, Canada.

E-mail: mullenc@cet.fsu.edu

Abstract

This paper compares the researcher's experiences of the quasi-parallel sites of prison and academe using a cross-institutional analysis. The moral framework of a carousel is used to advance possible connections between the institutional and regulatory life within prisons and teacher education. Connections are drawn to restrictions within a correctional writing program and qualitative protocols of research. The framework of a carousel promotes an expressive, less bounded way of studying prescriptive and liberatory practices. The carousel image underscores the institutional cycles of circularity, predictability, and continuity. Inmates, understood broadly, are viewed as "prisoners" of this pattern. The carousel also refers to the romance side of rehabilitation and re-education, and to institutional cover stories that can be disrupted in an effort to reform. The carousel framework is developed using multiple writing efforts that contradict traditional notions of education and rehabilitation. By examining the cultures of teacher education and correctional facilities, further insight into educators' conceptions can be gained.

Introduction

> It seemed as if they would never stop, as if there were no such thing as Time, as if the world was nothing but a circle of light and a group of painted horses. (Travers, 1982, p. 468)
>
> Halted in mid gallop, a frozen carousel charging forth without proceeding on my painted pony bound for hell. I can't feel the pain now, I've been lifted to new heights. It's all coming down around me, my sky is falling in. (prison participant)

In this paper a juxtaposition of prisons and academe is examined through the use of an unlikely but apt metaphor of the carousel. A new way of approaching at-risk issues is as a moral concept of "at-riskness" applied to people's lives within educational institutions and cross-cultural contexts. The method employed for tackling this endeavor is a preliminary cross-institutional analysis. Here I compare aspects of educational and correctional systems which I have experienced as a prison researcher-teacher. I use the moral framework of the carousel as an analytic template to undertake this comparison. Educators can provide insight into the making of a moral education by disrupting *and* transforming restrictive institutional practices of education and research.

To these reform ends, this paper describes how metaphorical imagining, the arts, and cross-institutional perspectives may all be helpful for enlarging moral approaches to how we can know education through discovery of the unfamiliar. Certainly in today's society, coherent stories about our lives as educators are needed for understanding what we do in schools and within the teacher education arena (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1995).

The carousel is used here as a device to both confront and re-imagine those practices of qualitative research and researcher socialization that require new vitality. As a moral framework,

the carousel underscores the value and necessity of experiences of border crossing (Feuerverger & Mullen, 1995; Giroux, 1991, 1993) into unfamiliar places in order to more fully engage in our own "professional knowledge landscape [which is] composed of relationships among people, places, and things, [and which is] both an intellectual and moral landscape" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996, p. 25). Through border crossing into correctional facilities or prison education, we can better examine moral development in our own field with respect to educational inquiry and its correctional elements; conversely, incarceration itself can produce liberatory elements that have educational meaning (Mullen, 1997). This paper considers how border crossing into the penal world can give rise to new meaning within cross-cultural contexts as well as within institutions of higher learning.

The carousel framework affirms Witherell's (1991) view that the researcher's "ethical self" depends on "sympathetic imagination" to promote the "caring relation" and the "attainment of moral identity" (pp. 90-93). Also intrinsic to the carousel framework is the development of a language "capable of awakening the moral, political and civic responsibilities of our youth" and educators in "places in which students are educated in the principles and practices of democracy, but not in a version of democracy cleansed of vision, possibility, or struggle" (Giroux, 1993, p. 24). The carousel ride within prisons aims to rehabilitate and within universities to re-educate. In these senses, it is potentially filled with moral vision, possibility, and struggle. However, the carousel ride can press people into passivity and detachment. To encourage reform activity, perspectives are offered for making "prison cultures" expressive and expansive domains.

A Moral Framework and Lexicon of Being At-Risk

At-riskness is defined here as those correctional processes and practices broadly at work within places of schooling that aim to rehabilitate or re-educate. Within institutions of higher learning, the socialization process of graduate students and faculty is problematic. Ethnographic and phenomenological studies of human lives is greatly encouraged (Grumet, 1992; Pinar & Reynolds, 1992; Van Maanen, 1988). But acceptable forms of representation typically model incomplete, diagnostic, and abstract ways of communicating otherwise vital personal research stories (Britton, 1990; Mullen, 1994; Richardson, 1994). What appears to be a repressive educational practice is also characteristic of literacy programs and other rehabilitative programs within prisons. My experience as a prison researcher-teacher has been that personal writing and expression is controlled through basic literacy exercises. Institutional critiques of programs, facilities, and persons in authority or "educator-judges" (Foucault, 1979, p. 304), who are possibly shackled by under-examined assumptions, are clearly deemed invalid. Correctional programmatic efforts may, then, be aimed at reconfiguring the social self of inmates rather than providing genuine opportunities for transformation.

I view morality as a form of cultural practice that ideally engages researchers and participants in recovering and (re)constructing inter-subjective connections despite institutional patterns of rotation and even inertia. As a researcher on a "carousel" within penal institutions, I have gone around in circles trying to find available spaces, within the infrastructure of the prison, to work with prison-participants. These literal working spaces were later transformed into value structures for me. My search was for creative writing opportunities and "spaces" to engage in personal, cultural, and critical expressions of meaning.

The term *prisoner* refers to actual incarcerated persons while *inmate* is broader, referring, for example, to educators and learners "imprisoned" in convention. Correctional and educational institutions are re-envisioned here using a specialized lexicon of carousel to reveal some of their similarities. *Carousels* or merry-go-rounds conjure up images of children at play with guardians watching nearby, but suggest patterns of rotation. This picture is innocent enough until "inmates" is substituted for "children," "gatekeepers" for guardians, and "inertia" for rotation. The carousel's hidden mechanisms and properties of circularity, predictability, and continuity are thought-provoking. Through the lens of the carousel, academe can be viewed as regulating bodies, curriculum, and perspectives, albeit less so than prisons.

At-riskness is a unique area of research to be uncovered within our own teacher education community. Being at-risk is clearly an issue for many children and adolescents who are growing up within a "prison-carousel" environment. Lasting effects of children at risk of failure in inner-city school environments are compounded by inadequate community services and economic supports provided to poorer schools (Kozol, 1991). Multicultural literacy programs aimed at minority populations within inner-city schools and jails target reform. Cross-culturally, minorities are less at-risk when multicultural programming provides learning strategies aimed at the development of personal sociocultural stories (Feuerverger & Mullen, 1995).

Being at-risk is also an issue affecting preservice teachers (and their future students) who must acquire, within traditional climates of higher learning, meaningful approaches to working with minority students (White, 1995, p. 32). A traditional white majority context is confirmed by recent statistics reported in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Bachelor's degrees conferred

by racial and ethnic group are as follows: 80.3% White, 7.2% Black, 4.3% Hispanic, 0.5% American Indian, and 2.9% non-resident alien (Gwaltney, 1996, p. A30).

Research that is produced on behalf of disadvantaged and advantaged groups within our educational institutions represents a kind of prison-carousel. This merry-go-round purports to be in support of educational change. Yet, we know little about how the very knowledge produced by researchers is influenced by their own assumptions and beliefs (Banks, 1994). Reform practices that proceed without knowledge of the shaping consciousness of its educators may prove to be less than potent. While this paper is not situated within school systems or teacher preparatory programs, it is nonetheless intended to stimulate conversation about those institutional spaces which can yield knowledge regarding conditions which give rise to at-riskness in people's lives.

The quasi-parallel drawn in this paper between prisons and teacher education is imperfect in that it has limitations. In comparison to the prison population, the higher education population is not seriously at-risk. But the 82% high school dropout rate among prisoners (White, 1995) presents a picture of schools as a carousel spun out-of-whack. The great humming mechanism of schools (as a carousel) reveals its dark side in prisons where failure is compounded by institutional forms of inertia. On the brighter side, some prisoners produce personal and sociocultural reflections on life even within the context of controlling forces.

Portraits of Black Hawk and Sear, both prisoner-writers, are introduced later to illustrate this point. Their portraits provide insight into the experience of the carousel-like ride of cultural selves (e.g., recovering substance abusers) who struggle to re-make their personal and family histories. These portraits were selected from my 1990-92 study of a maximum security prison.

for male offenders, located in Toronto, Ontario. On-site I managed to experience relatively sustained involvement with a total of 13 correctional research participants which included inmates, teachers, correctional officers, group facilitators, and education coordinators. My participant-observation also included contact with hundreds of prisoners and staff through three rehabilitative programs—Drug Awareness, Education/Literacy, and Creative Writing.

As a carousel, teacher education also has a dark or mysterious side. Its correctional processes and practices sometimes hold in tension its nobler, caring ambitions. Being "imprisoned" by research conventions and socially acceptable ways of telling stories of research can be viewed as a milder form of incarceration. While being "imprisoned" in this way is certainly different from actual incarceration, and while teacher candidates and prisoners are dissimilar culturally and politically, teacher educators (especially beginning and untenured) are nonetheless recipients of a fairly prescriptive set of regulatory practices. Yet, imaginative work is necessary for generating innovative perspectives on at-risk issues as well as educational reform (Sarason, 1990). It is also necessary in the moral search to make a difference in the lives of at-risk populations, including the educational community.

Prisons and academe can be linked through an illusion of movement or progress as well as real experiences of connection that in part characterize both realms. Lengthy waiting lists in prisons reveal blocked programmatic opportunities as well as lost literacy and rehabilitative gains. Educational theories abound in the area of how institutional power works to maintain the status quo or the interests of the majority. Inequities keep border individuals on the margins, struggling to change the circumstances of the underclass they themselves represent (Giroux, 1991; Paley, 1995). Teacher education aims to re-educate, but it may be constrained by its own

under-examined look at itself and its professional at-risk elements. Those who disrupt or even transform its protocols and methods of research may feel constrained to freely explore. The illusion of progress necessitates that graduate students, for example, provide human resources and practical settings to trial and test their mentors' theories. While this form of socialization contributes to intellectual growth, it overlooks the quality of experience for those who are professionally at-risk (Mullen & Dalton, 1996).

Personal stories of socialization are discouraged, as is evident in the paucity of researcher-situated inquiries. A critical challenge for our profession may be to "come clean" (Guba, 1990) with stories of correctional practices illustrating how moral engagements between and among persons are limited within institutional contexts (May, 1994). In order to broaden our scope of what is possible in the "development of a critical system of meaning" (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1995, p. 5), we can turn to cross-cultural investigations as a tool for inquiry.

Moral Paradigm through Personal Research Story

The moral paradigm case being narrated here is based on my field-based experience as a prison researcher-teacher. I attempt to offer insight into lived experiences of inmate-writers through a personal search for a macro-narrative of how prisons and academe control and, at times, release liberatory efforts. Phenomenological forms of ethnographic study contribute to the fieldworker's understanding of a world-in-contact. Insights into critical events can only have deeper educational meaning, however, if educators share more personally in their research reports.

On an ideological level, postmodern ethnography engages a proactive understanding of disruption. Taken-for-granted notions of educational experience are intended to be challenged within this framework. Postmodernists (e.g., Grumet, 1992, Pinar & Reynolds, 1992, Rose,

1990; Van Maanen, 1988) then, are, quite possibly reformers committed to the experience of individuals and to their way of making meaning. Moral education as such is especially needed in support of at-risk lives and, on a macro-level, the disciplinary life-world of imprisoned selves.

At-riskness viewed as a phenomenological concept grounded in the personal research story is a new area of exploration. It is meant in part that the researcher strives to capture how his or her thinking inhabits the same cultural, educational, or historical moment as those being studied. The metaphor of carousel brings together the words and writings of "prisoners" (incarcerated participants) and "inmates" (researchers) within the same interpretive moments. Just as I inhabited the same time frames as those whom I worked with and studied, prisoners and teacher educators in some ways experience similar correctional processes within their educational worlds. The prison culture is therefore being re-imagined here as a possible teacher education community at risk; teacher educators, in turn, are being re-imagined as at-risk of "riding" the carousel if not makers of it. Efforts to "re-make" the prison-carousel involve a dynamic interchange between the sympathetic imagination *and* critical reform actions.

Although regulations and practices govern, to varying degrees, how people live in prisons and teacher education, the unexpected grabs hold in both domains. People find ways to share personal research stories (McClintock, 1994), even within threatening circumstances. Through this process, prisoners and teacher educators engage in genuine "re-education" (Dewey, 1958) and, hence, in re-making aspects of the carousel. They give validity to stories of experience despite censoring bodies, curriculum, and perspectives. Many prisoners view their personal sociocultural writing, or disruptions of the carousel-ride, as political. Moral attitudes toward advancement and self-preservation are revealed in institutionally savvy terms: narrative writing

is generally (but not always) kept private unless self-gain, such as early parole or special privileges, is a forthcoming reward (Abbott, 1981; Caron, 1978).

Educators who tell personal research stories must preserve the "carousel" by interpreting their self-study methods as naturalistic tools of inquiry. Data that are treated as emergent, personally meaningful, and internally trustworthy attract suspicion (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The need to validate and account for how data is generated, selected, and interpreted is not what is at issue here. Rather, what is at issue is an a priori problem. The structure for the telling of research stories is already a given. Templates or "intellectual structures of disciplines and methods of pedagogy" (Grumet, 1988, p. 100) have been established. The systematic development of a qualitative study including its phases of negotiation of entry into and exit from research sites has been canonized (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) and hence taken-for-granted. Correctional practices shape the experience of socialization of researchers in their fields of study. Given that approximately 50 per cent of graduate students complete their dissertations (Hunt, 1994), there is a break-down in the effective socialization of teacher educators. Institutions of higher learning work hard to regulate bodies and curriculum, yet with statistics like this they falter, disrupting and even contradicting themselves.

To help expose at-risk elements within educational institutions, I briefly respond to these five guiding questions throughout this discussion:

1. What is the nature of the metaphor of the carousel?
2. What is the nature of the carousel in teacher education and research?
3. What is the nature of the carousel in prisons?

4. How is the work of educators constrained by insufficient inquiry into the at-risk nature of research practices?
5. And, How can we disrupt the "carousel" to determine a more authentic and innovative process in higher education?

Two intentions are at work behind these questions: one, the need to expose conventional researching perspectives as a form of correctionalism; and two, the effort to imagine penal and educational institutions as carousels of shaping influences and pressures.

The teacher education profession can benefit from better understanding how it is socializing itself and its members. To this end, the metaphor of carousel will now be used to illuminate specifics involved in a few key correctional processes at work within live prison contexts. The rest of the discussion will present carousels, prison cultures, and finally teacher education in descriptive narrative format to more fully engage in ethnographic phenomenological inquiry.

Moral Development from Carousel-Rider to Carousel-Maker

What is the nature of the metaphor of the carousel? And, What is the nature of the carousel in teacher education and research? The nature of the carousel ride in amusement parks attracts children to its display of animals (once highly decorative and distinctive wooden carvings are now replicas made from aluminum), and musical fantasy ride. Children enjoy the sensation of lunging forward on the backs of great, majestic animals. They delight in the illusion of movement. Just as the name "merry-go-round" suggests, its riders go around in circles while securely held in place. The carousel-rider is conveyed in Figure 1, "Carousel-Rider in Prisons and Teacher Education."

Figure 1

The star-bar image at the center of my computer generated graphic hints at the message of the carousel-maker. Here, the organ music which accompanies the carousel ride is typically haunting, suggestive of the dark and mysterious elements of life (Hinds, 1990). Despite these darker forces, carousel-riders playfully grab for the brass ring to bring themselves good fortune (Hinds, 1990), but without the attention required of carousel-makers. Such a playful gesture has the potential to symbolically interfere with patterns of rotation or inertia. The carousel, understood metaphysically, is a mechanism representing in physical terms human growth and the cycles of nature or greater macrocosm. But the carousel is also imprisoned within its hidden mechanisms and properties.

Historically, carousel-makers or artisans manufactured the brighter and lighter side of life. They were highly skilled at creating the illusion of life as fantasy. Indeed, the term "romance side" refers to the ornamental side of the animal which faced outward to impress onlookers, achieving its effect (Hinds, 1990). The romance story or facade presents merry-go-rounds as safe places to be. Romantic associations with the carousel are disrupted in Bradbury's (1962) vision. His world is out-of-whack, haunted by a sinister, lunatic carousel. Those who ride the carousel cling onto the horses, emerging much younger or older, or not at all. In an effort to preserve an image of themselves, they manipulate the passage of time, paying heavily for their vanity. If carousel-riders resist growth, carousel-makers pursue active reconstructions of self and other in revitalizing contexts.

At-risk students and teachers may also experience a moral cost for their own institutional rides. Given a study which reported the view of the United States federal government on bilingual programs as no longer meriting financial support because they are failing (Bastian, Fruchter, Gittell, Greer, & Haskins, 1986), an image of a societal carousel ride looms. We need to ask about students who drop out of school only to re-emerge, in some cases, as incarcerated riders of the prison-carousel. How can their development from carousel-rider to maker be encouraged? What can their stories contribute to the development of a critical system of meaning in education and society?

Society is depicted as a carousel in folk singer Joni Mitchell's (1974) song, "Circle Game." If society has made captive prisons within its own larger carousel, then we are all "painted ponies" "captive on the carousel of time." The societal romance story of prisons as opportunities for recovery and success is mostly seriously misleading. Prisoners generally do not have their rehabilitative needs met and, perhaps partly for this reason, become "revolving door" candidates who often return to prison life after release. Olson was himself a 23 year graduate of the prison system before he committed his murders (Morris, 1989). One way to disrupt and even transform the prison-carousel is to heed Lessings' (1986) advice: Study the very mechanisms society has created in order to deepen understanding of the ways in which we are socialized. In this context, concepts of reform may need to be reconceptualized as questions rather than as answers given their inextricable functioning within human consciousness.

What, then, is the nature of the carousel within teacher education and research? The romance side of teacher education presents viable forms of alternative research practices and innovative paradigms of knowledge. But these visions have not yet been rigorously undertaken

in studies beyond classrooms, nor have they been extensively "tested" within teacher educators' own lives and stories. The irony is that expressive, less bounded ways of doing educational research are mostly coming from the "romantic" forms of art and literature (Barone & Eisner, 1995; Eisner, 1993; Richardson, 1994). Such studies personalize experience and expose cover stories or facades. Less bounded ways of doing educational research are also being articulated by critical theorists who break codes of silence in their desire to "promote an individual's consciousness of himself or herself as a social being" (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1995, p. 9).

Prisoners and teacher educators are "inmates," albeit to varying degrees, whose perspectives and behaviors are regulated. In an effort to move from being carousel-riders to carousel-makers, we need to become "carvers" or constructivists of the imagination. Self-reflexive study offers artistic concepts of research practice that are simultaneously critiques of personally experienced institutional practices (Diamond, Mullen, & Beattie, 1996; Greene, 1991; Paley, 1995). The pragmatic value of these studies might be that the romance side of teacher education is exploited. Prescriptive practices are confronted and potentially transformed by the expression that artistic work gives to institutionally embedded metaphors, fantasies, stories, and emotions. Arts-based researchers and critical theorists may find useful the metaphor of carousel as a moral framework for the development of culturally grounded critiques of education.

Dilemmas of the Prison Culture

What is the nature of the carousel in prisons? Those who work or live in a correctional system (as I have continued to do) quickly learn to adjust their personal rhythms to its constraints. Rotational cycles or "carousels" exert pressure on the continuity and success of rehabilitative programs and working relationships. Prisoners, remanded until their court dates, are detained in

maximum security prisons which function as a "holding cell." On rotation, prisoners move through cell blocks to await court trials and sentencing, transfer to other places, or release on bail. Students and teachers in inner-city schools also cope with the financial and moral constraints of a "correctional" system and its unequal treatment (Kozol, 1991).

Prisoners whom I met with for a creative writing session (or sessions) were quickly moved around within the jail. Seemingly arbitrary demands of prison life frequently disrupted teaching-learning relationships as well as curricular objectives. A traditional perspective on successful curriculum is that it effects significant changes within students and their patterns of behavior (Tyler, 1949). Implicit moral dilemmas of the prison culture probably contradict this vision of sound pedagogic teaching. Although I did have sustained meetings with five prisoners in literacy and creative writing contexts, I never quite knew what to expect, whom I was going to see that week, or what we were going to be allowed to do. Dilemmas as such helped to produce situations of constant uncertainty, confusion, and vigilance. However, these situations of constraint also sometimes inadvertently gave rise to meaningful and shared connections.

Despite the barriers to the development of successful curriculum in the traditional sense, subtle changes were nonetheless sparked. A prolific and talented Native American had been stereotyped as a high school drop-out and addict with low literacy capabilities. Through a series of autobiographical works, he conveyed facets of his life and culture to me. His prison-carousel abounds in poems such as "Diminishing Reality" (1991) wherein "Memories of a child in time/The boy still cries inside/Dreamt of many things so grand … Cast away beyond the reach/Pretend to be was made of me/Full life it would never come to be … ." The 'rose and heart' symbol in one of Black Hawk's drawings also embraces a kind of carousel, but of street-life and

its dark elements. The center of the drawing depicts classical images of love and romance; surrounding episodic frames convey endless, painful circularity. People move around, but it is from one form of street violence to another and it is within a larger carousel of social inertia. After several productive encounters, Black Hawk was transferred without warning. Unfulfilled potential is also the "prison" of at-risk students, teachers, and researchers whose stories matter but fail to have an impact or to survive cross-culturally.

The expressive life offers prisoners material for recovery of self and of society (Abbott, 1981; Caron, 1978; Harris, 1986). Sear, another prisoner-writer without a high school education, wrote a poem called "Mr. Jones (to the Moon)" (1992). It demonstrated his personal meaning of the carousel metaphor. In it, the drug addict is at the mercy of a powerful force. Mr. Jones is a "drug lord" and, rather ambiguously, also a vigilant prison gatekeeper. Either way, the addict is locked in mutual sickness. The drug addict lives in a state of sickness, morbidity, and motionlessness. There is accelerated movement in this carousel ride, but the experience of seduction is simultaneously one of self-destruction: "I am high again/I can't feel the pain now, I've been lifted to new heights/He's here to curl his arms around me/To the moon!" These lines run parallel to carousel images of psychological constriction in the poem: "Halted in mid gallop, a frozen carousel/charging forth without proceeding/on my painted pony bound for hell."

Sear's mythology of the drug lord and addict disturbs the ability to make easy moral judgments about the growth of the carousel-rider: Is this poem a story of substance recovery or, conversely, of celebrated addiction? Is this prisoner a voice for other recovering addicts? Is he possibly a community activist? If so, is this writer also a carousel-maker of educational and societal reform? How can we trust that his vision represents a new way of seeing? Such

questions are intended to disturb taken-for-granted assumptions about high school drop-outs as uniformly functionally illiterate. Moreover, the view that the sympathetic imagination of these same persons can offer something meaningful to the re-education of human beings probably seems outlandish. Such re-imaginings (or reversals of norms) can result from on-site, phenomenological investigations of at-risk persons.

Grabbing the Brass Ring in Teacher Education and Research

How can we disrupt the "carousel" to determine a more innovative, qualitative process in higher education? As a parallel, within the prison, the board-sponsored education program that was in operation presumed prisoners to be generally illiterate, capable of only handling literacy and life skills material appropriate to the grade 8 (and lower) level. Personal and artistic forms of writing were discouraged within even the creative writing program.

Other teacher educators also look for ways to imaginatively recreate their world as a place of emancipatory pedagogy, and human connection and artistic activity. Teacher educators dream about the need to create moral "spaces for communicating across the boundaries … [and] for becoming different in the midst of intersubjective relationships … through carving, painting, dancing, singing, writing" (Greene, 1991, p. 28). We may dream across boundaries and about crossing lines, but the effort remains to cast ourselves as characters within our own telling. Dreams, metaphors, and fantasies can serve as powerful agents toward the disruption and reconstruction of received practices and traditions. Dreams can also place us in at-risk situations given that artistic research releases our imagination and gives it form (Diamond, Mullen, & Beattie, 1996). As a moral issue, when we reconfigure for the purpose of transformation our researcher self and role in a new context, we learn differently. We begin to re-see taken-for-

granted worlds. Can at-risk participants similarly learn to re-position their taken-for-granted worlds? The luxury this concept of re-seeing affords is compounded by the need to take action in morally complex domains.

I ask, How is the work of educators constrained by insufficient inquiry into the at-risk nature of research practices? As "inmates," qualitative researchers undergo rituals of research practice. As "prison paradigms" these rituals script how teacher educators should engage field site research and construct interpretive case studies. A taken-for-granted attitude permeates ideological construction in the areas of:

- "What" (conventional classroom sites, teachers' pedagogies and narratives, and broader contextualizations of schooling),
- "How" (observation of classroom events and accumulation of "thick data" based on a satisfactory, or preferably extended, period of time),
- and, "Why" (to improve the quality of education, instruction, and curriculum).

Such a carousel or cycle of research can limit thinking regarding intensive and imaginary levels of ethnographic phenomenological study.

Like Rose (1990), a narrative ethnographer who lived alongside working-class African-Americans in an unfamiliar context, one can engage in unauthorized methods of data gathering. But the cost may be one of researcher abandonment. A chief resource that can be brought to the work of qualitative research is the energy of disturbing *and* transforming the very paradigm of received practices. The researcher, when viewed as the "main research instrument" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992) for example, is most likely engaged in some form of "emancipatory pedagogy"

(Greene, 1991). But even the notion of self-as-instrument may limit the degree to which the researcher can share vital stories of practice.

Just as prisoners "grab for the brass ring" by telling stories of suffering, loss, recovery, and renewal, teacher educators can reach to share their own stories of practice. In Salinger's (1964) classic story, Holden Caulfield resists riding the carousel and grabbing for the brass ring. By resisting personal growth, he avoids taking responsibility for action in a social context. However, Caulfield's younger sister does grab for the brass ring. Educators can also "grab for the brass ring" by telling personal research stories which demand "attention and dialogue ... in order to understand individuals in the context of their personal and cultural environments" (Witherell, 1991, p. 84).

It is the wonder of "strange" dreams, such as those that bring together new places and strangers through moral frameworks, that may disturb or even dismantle the carousel. Abbott's (1981) classic prison narrative tells us that the "most dangerous prisoners" are "readers and writers" (p. 19). If readers and writers are the powerful and the imprisoned, then the stories of all inmates, regardless of institutional domain, are relevant to the moral development of teachers and learners. Abbott (1981) writes hauntingly of a macro-carousel world wherein "Prisoners are only a few steps removed from society. After us, comes you" (p. 21).

Final Imaginings and the Morality of Strange Dreams

The teacher education community can aim to disrupt its own carousel by questioning taken-for-granted constructions of human life and behavior. Where we generalize in one area(na), we probably generalize in another. As a society we view prisoners, for example, as captive misfits, heroic and anti-heroic convicts, and misanthropic wrong-doers. Instead of looking for ourselves,

we may accept representations that stereotype prisoners (Lessing, 1986). How can we re-invent static, if not mis-educative, perceptions? The Birdman of Alcatraz (wrote another prisoner) rejected the view of life through a microscope only, inventing his own way of seeing:

> The Birdman of Alcatraz is awake and I am shocked at what I see. He sits, naked, at a table looking through, of all things, a microscope. Then an even stranger thing happens. He jumps up from his work abruptly, walks toward the wall of his cell and disappears. Instantly I hear what sounds like the singing of thousands of birds rising to a frenzied pitch. ... I think I'm having a strange dream, but a closer look reveals a curtained doorway between his cell and the next one. ... He soon reappears with several birds perched on his shoulders and two on top of his head. They're each of a different hue—red, green, and pale orange (Karpis, 1980, p. 25).

Like the Birdman of Alcatraz, McClane, a professor, invented his own way of seeing. In a single creative writing session experienced at Auburn Correctional Facility, McClane (1988) viewed prisoners as "... people, cussed and joy-filled: people capable of tenderness and murder" (p. 230). When we as a society banish prisoners or shut them away, we suppress the possibility of seeing ourselves in the context of being at-risk. Until we dream differently and more splendidly, our accounts of prisoners will remain academic, impersonal, and distanced. Our own moral landscapes in academe probably benefit from serious "commitment to genuine dialogue, imagination, and ethical concern that guards against our detachment" (Witherell, 1991, p. 85).

The way life is organized within educational institutions makes it challenging to work with the kind of "willingness [that is required] to resist the forces that press people into passivity and bland acquiescence" (Greene, 1991, p. 27). Because carousel-riders are imprisoned within

forces that restrict and conditions that limit, they may be at-risk, simply existing. Carousel-makers, in contrast, are alive in their effort to generate new ways of seeing better ways forward.

A non-seeing man who regained his sight after decades of blindness only to become blind again, suffered the perils of learning how to see in a visual world. Although it was a miracle that his vision was suddenly restored for a short time, a deeper miracle had not taken place. Sacks' (1993) patient was unable to make sense of a world not experienced by him as a seeing person, and for which he had no visual memories to support his newfound perceptions. I believe that the teacher education community is also struggling to "see" the relevance of at-risk issues and populations to our own moral needs and purposes.

We, as researchers, have created a coherent world through experience, categorization, memory, and reconstruction. It is a challenge to look again at what we have created and to re-make ourselves in the process. This force of reconstruction helps shape moral commitment. Linking unlikely worlds to illuminate lived issues of at-riskness within them can facilitate new growth. Comparative forms of research enlarge concepts of educational and institutional life. We need such interconnected ways of construing our field, our texts, and ourselves. If prisons are carousels of constraint on how experience is to be represented, then they are also places from which we want to speak with a vitality.

Perspectives can be enriched by the discovery of new "locations" within the researcher self. More stories can help to expose the inmate condition within our own institutions, research paradigms, and daily work. We need to take the risk, even if we become at-risk in the process, of bringing more of ourselves to our places of work.

Higher education communities might benefit from participating in variations on these reform actions:

1. experiment with new qualitative and innovative forms of research in alternative settings,
2. become carousel-makers who "grab for the brass ring" and who also assist at-risk populations in telling personal educational stories,
3. study taken-for-granted assumptions and generalizations in order to disrupt and transform systemic inequities and unfair practices,
4. challenge repressive forces within educational institutions; also research correctional processes and practices in order to change them,
5. study the quality of at-risk lives within schools, universities, and other educational contexts, such as daycares and federal penitentiaries,
6. and, discover metaphors or examples of at-riskness that break open existing educational canons.

Finally, by re-making our experience within particular educational institutions, other places can be impacted. This by-product of change should ideally provoke the impulse to study unfamiliar worlds and hidden lives in a more systematic way.

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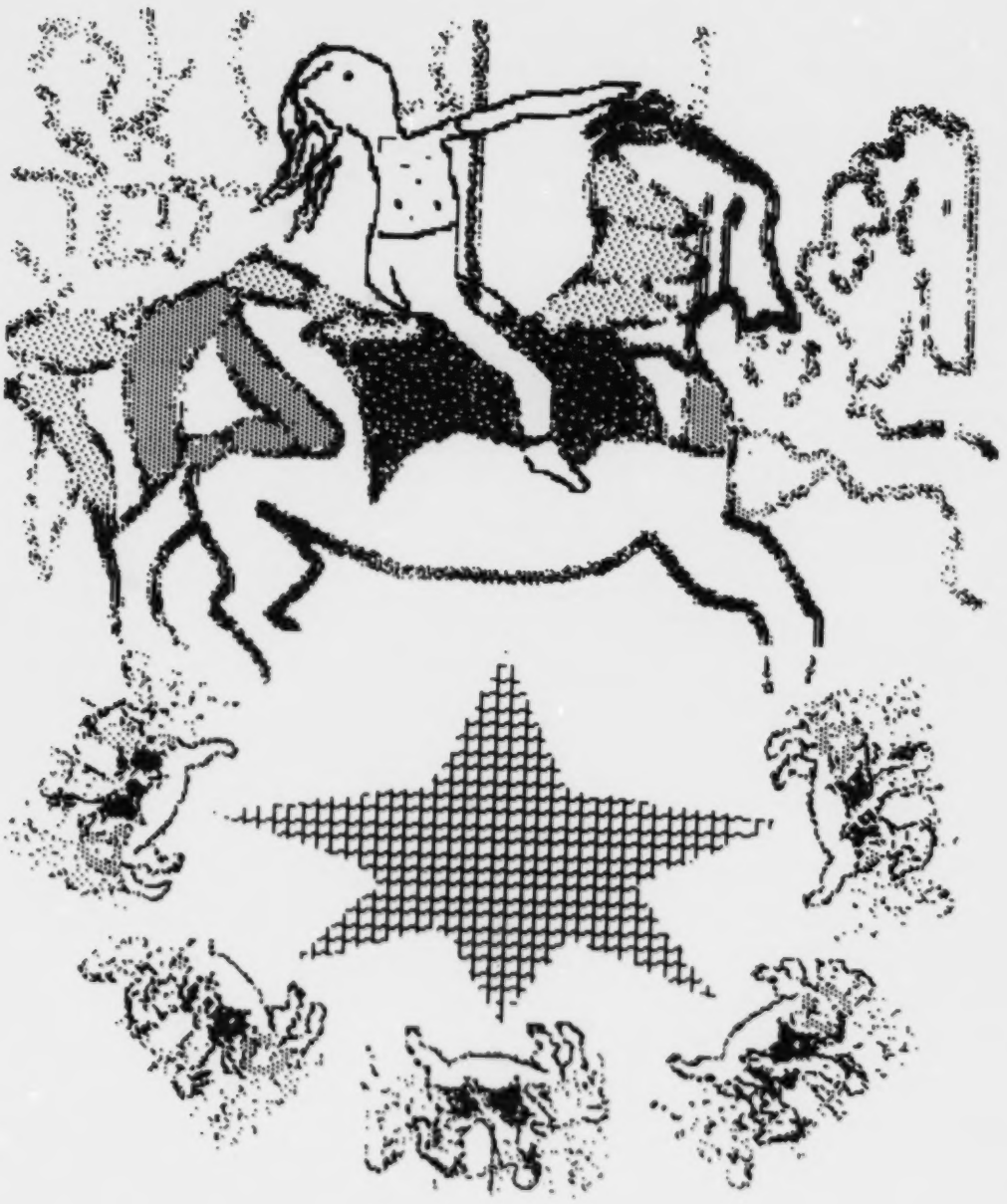
Figure 1. "Carousel-Rider in Prisons and Teacher Education" presents a metaphoric view of prison and academia. The carousel-rider/inmate has yet to be awakened to the deeper meaning of grabbing for the brass ring/telling personal research stories in social contexts.



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Author's Notes

I wish to extend my gratitude to the inmates of this study for their courage in sharing personal forms of sociological writing, and for contributing new dimensions to the metaphor of carousel. All participants named have also contributed to my own process of re-education and been given self-selected pseudonyms.

At the time I had not appreciated the potential significance of the re-birth of my prolific Native Indian participant, "Black Hawk." There existed an historic figure named Black Hawk (1767-1838), a Sauk chieftain, who had resisted white settlement in Indian territory in Illinois which resulted in the Black Hawk War. Upon release from prison, this leader prepared his autobiography, *Life of Black Hawk* (1916/1994), to explain to the United States how the conflict had related to his tribal history, character, and principles governing his actions. Parallels suggested in this account between this important figure and my own participant tease the imagination. They also provide a glimpse into the value of border crossing through personal identification with another's sociocultural story.

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